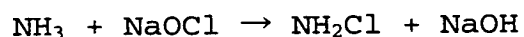


The present invention relates to a process for the synthesis of monochloramine. More specifically, the present invention relates to a process for the synthesis of monochloramine by reaction of ammonium chloride with sodium hypochlorite.

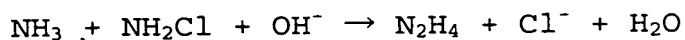
One of the main applications of monochloramine is the synthesis of substituted or unsubstituted hydrazines, compounds used in the space industry for the manufacture of propellants, in agrochemistry for the synthesis of growth regulators or plant-protection products, or in the pharmaceutical industry.

A person skilled in the art already knows a process for the synthesis of monochloramine, by reaction of sodium hypochlorite with ammonia; it is the first stage of the Raschig process:



In such a synthesis, the ammonia is always used in excess with respect to the sodium hypochlorite. It is also known to use a mixed solution of ammonia and of ammonium chloride, the ratio of the concentration of total ammonia (ammonia and ammonium chloride) to the concentration of sodium hypochlorite being of the order of 3. The excess of ammonia with respect to the sodium hypochlorite is a necessary condition in order to obtain stable chloramine with a high yield. In point of fact, the disadvantage of such reaction conditions is the presence of hydrazine as reaction by-product. This is because, as ammonia is used in excess with respect

to the sodium hypochlorite, it reacts with the chloramine thus synthesized to form hydrazine:



As the Raschig process is used for the  
5 synthesis of monomethylhydrazine, the presence of hydrazine in the reaction medium is a major disadvantage. It is subsequently necessary to remove the hydrazine, either by distillation or catalytically, which greatly increases the cost of the process.

10 A person skilled in the art is therefore constantly searching for a process for the synthesis of monochloramine under stoichiometric conditions, that is to say without excess of ammonia, in order to avoid any parallel reaction between the monochloramine formed and  
15 the residual ammonia in the reaction medium. Such a process is a subject-matter of the present invention.

The present invention relates to a process for the synthesis of monochloramine by reaction of an  
20 ammonium chloride solution with a sodium hypochlorite solution, characterized in that the sodium hypochlorite solution is basified beforehand with an inorganic base and in that the ratio of the concentration of ammonium chloride in the reaction medium to the concentration of  
25 sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is between 1 and 1.5. The ratio of the concentration of ammonium chloride in the reaction medium to the concentration of sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is preferably equal to 1.1.

The reaction is carried out "volume to volume", which means that the volume of the sodium hypochlorite solution used and the volume of the ammonium chloride solution used are identical.

5           This process makes possible the synthesis of monochloramine with a high yield, of greater than 95%, under "quasistoichiometric" conditions. The term "quasistoichiometric" conditions is used to describe reaction conditions under which the ammonium chloride  
10 is used in slight excess with respect to the sodium hypochlorite. Thus, any competitive reaction between the monochloramine formed and the ammonia remaining in the reaction medium is avoided. This process makes it possible to obtain a final solution concentrated in  
15 monochloramine and comprising very little ammonia. Thus, the level of residual ammonia is lower by approximately 95% in comparison with the processes of the state of the art.

          Surprisingly, it has been found that the fact  
20 of using a sodium hypochlorite solution basified beforehand with an inorganic base makes it possible to synthesize chloramine under quasistoichiometric conditions with a very good yield, of greater than 95%, the chloramine thus synthesized being stable. In fact,  
25 comparative tests show that a simple adaptation of the conventional process, while operating under stoichiometric conditions, makes it possible to synthesize chloramine only with a low yield, of the

order of 50%, the chloramine formed under such reaction conditions being unstable.

The inorganic base is preferably chosen from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and  
5 lithium hydroxide. In a particularly preferred way, the inorganic base is sodium hydroxide. The inorganic base used to basify the sodium hypochlorite solution is used either in the solid form or in the form of an aqueous solution. In a particularly preferred way, the  
10 inorganic base is used in the form of an aqueous solution. The concentration of the inorganic base in the sodium hypochlorite solution is generally between 0.05 mol/l and 1 mol/l, preferably between 0.1 mol/l and 0.5 mol/l. The pH of the reaction medium is thus  
15 between 8 and 11.

The sodium hypochlorite solution used is a bleach solution having a French chlorometric degree of between 45° (which corresponds to a sodium hypochlorite concentration of approximately 2 mol/l) and 70° (which  
20 corresponds to a sodium hypochlorite concentration of approximately 3 mol/l). The concentration of sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is between 0.5 mol/l and 1.5 mol/l.

The reaction is generally carried out at a temperature  
25 of between -15°C and 0°C.

A preferred embodiment of the invention is now given. The reaction is carried out in a jacketed reactor, thus making possible the circulation of a temperature-controlled fluid between the two walls. The

temperature within the reactor is between  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$ . An ammonium chloride solution is introduced into this reactor. A basified sodium hypochlorite solution is prepared. For this, an inorganic base, preferably in the form of an aqueous solution, and a sodium hypochlorite solution are mixed beforehand. The concentration of the inorganic base in the sodium hypochlorite solution is generally between  $0.05\text{ mol/l}$  and  $1\text{ mol/l}$ . The basified sodium hypochlorite solution is cooled to a temperature of between  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and is introduced dropwise into the reactor using a dropping funnel. The volume of sodium hypochlorite solution introduced is identical to the volume of the ammonium chloride solution present in the reactor. The concentrations of the two solutions are chosen so that the ratio of the concentration of ammonium chloride in the reaction medium to the concentration of sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is between 1 and 1.5, preferably approximately 1.1. The concentration of the sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is generally between  $0.5\text{ mol/l}$  and  $1.5\text{ mol/l}$ . The addition of the sodium hypochlorite solution lasts approximately 15 minutes. The temperature of the reaction medium is between  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$ , preferably approximately  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$ . At the end of the reaction, a chloramine solution is obtained with a very good yield, of the order of 99%. The reaction medium comprises very little residual ammonia; its concentration is less than  $0.2\text{ mol/l}$ .

The examples which follow illustrate, without implied limitation, possibilities for implementing the invention.

- 5    Example 1: Synthesis of chloramine from a 2.07 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution and a 2.28 mol/l ammonium chloride solution

          The reaction is carried out in a 100 ml jacketed reactor made of borosilicate glass. The  
10    temperature within the reactor is maintained at  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$  by circulation of a temperature-controlled fluid. 20 ml of a 2.28 mol/l ammonium chloride solution are introduced into this reactor. A 2.07 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution is prepared, the sodium hydroxide  
15    concentration of which is 0.12 mol/l. 20 ml of the preprepared sodium hypochlorite solution, cooled to  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ , are subsequently introduced dropwise into the same reactor. The concentration of ammonium chloride in the reaction medium is therefore 1.14 mol/l and the  
20    concentration of sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is therefore 1.035 mol/l. The ratio of the ammonium chloride concentration to the sodium hypochlorite concentration ( $[\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}]/[\text{NaOCl}]$ ) is equal to 1.1. The addition lasts 15 minutes and is carried  
25    out using a dropping funnel. The temperature of the reaction medium settles at  $-7^{\circ}\text{C}$  with stirring.  
At the end of the reaction, a 1.03 mol/l chloramine solution is obtained, which corresponds to a yield of

99.5%. The residual total ammonia concentration is measured; it is 0.105 mol/l.

Example 2: Synthesis of chloramine from a 3 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution and a 3.34 mol/l ammonium chloride solution

The reaction is carried out in a 100 ml jacketed reactor made of borosilicate glass. The temperature within the reactor is maintained at  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$  by circulation of a temperature-controlled fluid. 20 ml of a 3.34 mol/l ammonium chloride solution are introduced into this reactor. A 3 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution is prepared, the sodium hydroxide concentration of which is 0.3 mol/l. 20 ml of the prepared sodium hypochlorite solution, cooled to  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ , are subsequently introduced dropwise into the same reactor. The concentration of ammonium chloride in the reaction medium is therefore 1.17 mol/l and the concentration of sodium hypochlorite in the reaction medium is therefore 1.5 mol/l. The ratio of the ammonium chloride concentration to the sodium hypochlorite concentration ( $[\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}]/[\text{NaOCl}]$ ) is equal to 1.1. The addition lasts 15 minutes and is carried out using a dropping funnel. The temperature of the reaction medium settles at  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$  with stirring.

At the end of the reaction, a 1.43 mol/l chloramine solution is obtained, which corresponds to a yield of 95.3%. The residual total ammonia concentration is measured; it is 0.17 mol/l.

The following Examples 3 and 4 do not form part of the invention. They were carried out for the purpose of showing, first, the improvement brought about by the process which is a subject-matter of the invention in  
5 comparison with the state of the art and, secondly, that the process which is a subject-matter of the invention is not a simple adaptation of the process already known to a person skilled in the art.

10 Example 3: Synthesis of chloramine, according to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the Raschig process, from a 2.01 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution and a 3.60 mol/l ammonia and 2.38 mol/l ammonium chloride mixed solution

The reaction is carried out in a 100 ml  
15 jacketed reactor made of borosilicate glass. The temperature within the reactor is maintained at -11°C by circulation of a temperature-controlled fluid. 20 ml of a 3.6 mol/l ammonia and 2.38 mol/l ammonium chloride mixed solution are introduced into this reactor. 20 ml  
20 of a 2.01 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution, cooled beforehand to -15°C, are subsequently introduced dropwise into the same reactor. The ratio of the concentration of total ammonia to the concentration of sodium hypochlorite ( $([\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}] + [\text{NH}_3])/[\text{NaOCl}]$ ) is equal  
25 to 2.9. The addition lasts 15 minutes and is carried out using a dropping funnel. The temperature of the reaction medium settles at -7°C with stirring.  
At the end of the reaction, a 1.00 mol/l chloramine solution is obtained, which corresponds to a yield of



99.9%. The residual total ammonia concentration is measured; it is 1.99 mol/l, which is markedly greater than the residual total ammonia concentration obtained according to the process which is a subject-matter of  
5 the invention.

Example 4: Synthesis of chloramine, according to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the Raschig process, under stoichiometric conditions, that is to say from a 2.17 mol/l sodium  
10 hypochlorite solution and a 2.38 mol/l ammonia solution

The reaction is carried out in a 100 ml jacketed reactor made of borosilicate glass. The temperature within the reactor is maintained at -11°C by circulation of a temperature-controlled fluid. 20 ml  
15 of a 2.38 mol/l ammonia solution are introduced into this reactor. 20 ml of a 2.17 mol/l sodium hypochlorite solution, cooled beforehand to - 15°C, are subsequently introduced dropwise into the same reactor. The ratio of the concentration of ammonia to the concentration of  
20 sodium hypochlorite ( $[\text{NH}_3]/[\text{NaOCl}]$ ) is equal to 1.1. The addition lasts 15 minutes and is carried out using a dropping funnel. The temperature of the reaction medium settles at -5°C with stirring.

At the end of the reaction, a 0.59 mol/l chloramine  
25 solution is obtained, which corresponds to a yield of 54.3%, a yield markedly lower than that obtained according to the process which is a subject-matter of the invention.